

COR-1362

28 September 1961

MEMORANDUM FOR THE RECORD

SUBJECT: Minutes of Special Group Meeting, 28 September 1961

PRESENT: General Taylor, Mr. Johnson, Mr. Gilpatric, Mr. Dulles,  
General Lemnitzer and Mr. Bundy

✓ 1. TACKLE

This project was reconsidered in the light of additional information submitted, particularly with respect to coverage to date.

Mr. Johnson said that the State Department's position remains the same - that the Department is opposed unless the intelligence requirements are overriding, and they are not convinced that this is the case. He emphasized that if the U.S. were about to engage in military operations, then of course the urgency of the intelligence requirements would be considerably up-graded and the matter would be viewed differently.

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It was also brought out that the U-2 coverage of North Vietnam in August was not complete enough, due to cloud cover.

The Group finally agreed that another U-2 flight should be mounted over North Vietnam to supplement the information received in August, and that this flight could be authorized to stray across the border so as to obtain oblique photography of key airfields in China near the border. In addition the first feasible flight of CORONA will be programmed so as to cover South China, unless detailed examination indicates that this procedure would prove unduly damaging to CORONA coverage of the USSR.

✓ 2. Reconnaissance of the USSR

The proposal for U-2 reconnaissance of the USSR was then taken up. General Lemnitzer stated that there was a very strong military requirement for this photography. Mr. Johnson recognized this need

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but took the position that if the proposed operations would simply result in more information, without involving a type of information that would lead to a change in policies, priorities or estimates of possible Soviet action, then the risk would not be justified. All members agreed that this issue should be clearly delineated.

General Taylor said that his understanding after last week's discussion had been that certain areas in which the presence of ICBM's is suspected would be clearly identified and that the thrust of the current proposal would be that these areas require U-2 coverage. It was generally agreed that the numerous papers before the Group did not give this sharp a focus and it was decided that as soon as possible the following should be done: The suspected areas will be marked out on a map and the four proposed routes will be clearly shown. An agreed estimate of the percentage of vulnerability for each of these flights will be made. The location of all known SAM's will be charted in relation to these routes. It will be clearly explained what intelligence information is expected to be obtained, together with an estimate as to what effect such information would have on current U.S. plans and thinking; this estimate will take into account past and future CORONA results.

General Lemnitzer said that he would make sure that SAC experts participate in preparing these papers.

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Thomas A. Parrott

Distribution

Mr. Johnson  
Mr. Gilpatric  
Mr. Dulles  
General Lemnitzer  
General Taylor

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